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Statement by Bill Felice, U.N. Representative of the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples before the Special Committee on Decolonization of the United Nations

East Timor and the Rights of Peoples

On behalf of the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, I would like to make the following statement in regard to the current situation in East Timor. On previous occasions before this Commission as well as before the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Commission for Human Rights, representatives from the International League have presented specific and documented evidence concerning the violation of the rights of peoples taking place in East Timor.

Why our concern with East Timor? Our League was founded on July 4, 1976 with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples on the premise that effective respect for human rights necessarily implies respect for the rights of peoples. Principles in the Universal Declaration include:

--Every people has the right to existence. (Sec. I, Article 1)

--Every people has the right to the respect of its national and cultural identity. (Sec. I, Article 2)

--Every people has the right to retain peaceful possession of its territory...(Sec. I, Article 3)

--None shall be subjected, because of his national or cultural identity, to massacre, torture, persecution...(Sec. I, Article 4)

--Every people has an imprescriptible and inalienable right to self-determination. It shall determine its political status freely and without any foreign interference. (Sec. II, Article 5)

--Every people has the right to break free from any colonial or foreign domination, whether direct or indirect, and from any racist regime. (Sec. II., Article 6)

--Every people has the right to have a democratic government...(Sec. II, Article 7)

--The gravest violations of the fundamental rights of people, especially of their right to existence, constitute international crimes for which their perpetrators shall carry personal penal liabilities. (Sec. VII, Article 27)

Because these are our principles, we find that we cannot ignore the situation in East Timor as so many in the Western world have done.

We believe that the record shows quite clearly and strongly that the authorities in power in Indonesia have violated the rights of the people of East Timor and their actions constitute international crimes which must be addressed by the world community.

To briefly review the record of intervention and repression of the people of East Timor by Indonesia:

**Over ten years of war have resulted in the deaths of between 100,000 and 200,000 Timorese, approximately a quarter of the population. (Pre-invasion population of 680,000.)

**Indonesia has carried out brutal counterinsurgency operations. Entire populations in a number of villages have been uprooted and moved to camps on the eastern tip of the island.

**Amnesty International published a report in June 1985 which states that since the invasion hundreds of non-combatant civilians have been arbitrarily killed; people who surrendered to Indonesian forces or were captured, have been extrajudicially executed; prisoners have "disappeared" after arrest and after being taken from detention centers and prisons; prisoners in the custody of Indonesian troops have been tortured; and arbitrary arrests and detention without trial have been carried out on a massive scale.

**In late 1978 and 1979 hundreds were reported to have been executed or to have "disappeared" during "Operation Clean-up".

**In 1980 many people "disappeared" or are known to have been killed, some of them beaten to death.

**In 1981 a security sweep included the use of thousands of civilians as a human "fence" by advancing Indonesian troops.

**In 1983 "Operation Clean-Sweep" aimed to eliminate FRETILIN, and resulted in more "disappearances" and deaths in custody. Some prisoners who surrendered after being promised amnesty were killed; people merely suspected of disloyalty to Indonesia were arrested, imprisoned and tortured.

**Indonesia has gone so far as to restrict international aid and relief organizations. Catholic Relief and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have reported difficulties in carrying out their programs in East Timor. The ICRC was banned from entering East Timor between 1975 and 1979 and again banned in 1981 and 1983. Aid has been accepted only through the Indonesian authorities who distribute it in accordance with their political and military goals.

International Outcry

Since the invasion and occupation of East Timor by Indonesia in 1975, numerous attempts by the international community have

been undertaken--calling upon Indonesia to withdraw its invading troops.

**In Dec. of 1975 the General Assembly called upon the Government of Indonesia "to desist from further violation of the territorial integrity of Portugese Timor and to withdraw without delay its armed forces from the territory." That same month the Security Council adopted resolution 384 supporting the action of the General Assembly.

**The General Assembly has adopted resolutions every year from 1975 to 1982 rejecting the claim that East Timor has been integrated into Indonesia and stating that the people of the territory have not been able to exercise their right to self-determination.

**And in June of 1986 a bipartisan group of 133 members of the United States House of Representatives, led by Representative Tony P. Hall from Ohio, sponsored a resolution on the tragic situation in East Timor. The 133 cosponsors are the largest number of House members to cosponsor a resolution on this issue.

In a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Schultz, Representative Hall urges Schultz to look into "reports of disapperances, summary executions, torture, 'hidden prisons' to which international humanitarian agencies do not have access, and forced birth control"

"Such a birth control program instituted in East Timor by the Indonesian government takes on graver significance beyond reports of coercion. The huge loss of life in East Timor since the Indonesian invasion, compounded by the comparatively small original population, gives any birth control program carried out by Jakarta some profoundly disquieting implications for the survival of the East Timor people," Hall warned.

Conclusion

We strongly believe in the rights of a people to exist AS A PEOPLE. This is embodied not only in our League's Declaration of Algiers, but in the Charter of the United Nations itself. We believe that Indonesia is violating the rights of the people of East Timor to exist as a people.

In all negotiations, the legitimate representatives of the people of East Timor--the FRETILIN--must be represented.

The situation parallels that of Namibia, South Africa, and Palestine.

If elections are to be held they must be truly democratic involving all parties and not the phony democracy we saw in Marcos' Philipines and that we still see in Pinochet's Chile.

We call on the Special Committee on Decolonization to take the lead in the international community and act with great boldness to remedy this intolerable situation.

Thank you.